



NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Department of Health Announces 47th Case in Hepatitis C Outbreak

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) has identified the 47th case in the Minot hepatitis C outbreak investigation. The 46th and 47th cases are residents of Somerset Court in Minot and have not been residents of ManorCare Health Services - Minot. The first 45 cases all occurred in current or former residents of ManorCare.

Following the discovery of the 46th case, the NDDoH conducted additional testing in Minot, which led to the identification of the 47th case. The NDDoH will be contacting additional people for testing in the Minot area. The NDDoH and Somerset Court are working closely together to determine how and when these cases occurred.

“The presence of this strain of hepatitis C outside of ManorCare indicates that the outbreak is not confined to that facility, and that is a concern for the North Dakota Department of Health,” according to Kirby Kruger, Director of Disease Control at the NDDoH. “We need to do additional testing to better determine the parameters of the outbreak and ensure infection control procedures are in place to help stop the transmission of the virus,” Kruger added.

In December, the NDDoH released their preliminary findings, which stated that statistical information suggested that having hepatitis C may be associated with receipt of: (1) podiatry and phlebotomy (blood draw) services through contractual agreements with Trinity Health; and (2) nail care services by ManorCare. So far in the investigation, the two new cases fit within the original findings without the exposure to ManorCare.

When the outbreak was first identified, the NDDoH worked with ManorCare to review and reinforce infection control policies and procedures. In February 2014, a consultant hired by the NDDoH worked with the facility to further review infection control procedures. Ongoing testing has not identified any new cases at ManorCare.

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If you are contacted as a part of the outbreak investigation, the NDDoH urges you to have the requested blood test. Those who test positive for hepatitis C should seek additional care from their medical provider. Testing results, both positive and negative, can provide valuable information in the investigation.

Hepatitis C is a viral infection that can cause serious liver disease. People with Hepatitis C should work with their health-care provider on a care plan for their infection. Hepatitis C is primarily transmitted through blood-to-blood contact. The Hepatitis C virus is NOT spread by sharing eating utensils, hugging, kissing, holding hands, coughing, or sneezing, and it is not spread through food or water.

For more information, contact Kirby Kruger, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2372.

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